



NICOLETTE BOELE MP
FEDERAL MEMBER FOR BRADFIELD

20 February 2026

The Hon Sam Rae MP
Minister for Aged Care and Seniors
House of Representatives
PO Box 6022
CANBERRA ACT 2600

By email: minister.rae@health.gov.au

Cc: The Hon. Mark Butler MP, Minister for Health and Ageing

Implementation of Aged Care Reforms

Dear Minister,

We write to request an urgent update from your office in relation to how the government will address the significant problems being experienced in the implementation of the aged care reforms, including a timeline for a response to the recommendations of the Senate Community Affairs References Committee report on Aged Care Service Delivery (the Report).

Many of our constituents have raised with us their concerns and difficulties navigating the reforms that commenced on 1 November 2025. These concerns broadly echo those that have been highlighted in recent media¹, with constituents across our electorates reporting issues with:

- the Single Assessment System (SAS);
- access to funding once assessments are completed;
- service pricing and the 'no worse off' principle; and
- incorrect charging of means-tested residential aged care fees.

1. SMH: [Aged care: Labor's shiny new scheme is a \\$10b rip-off](#), The Guardian: [Algorithm-based tool for home support funding is cruel and inhumane. Australian aged care workers warn | Aged care | The Guardian](#)

The SAS was designed to reduce wait times for aged care assessments based on efficiencies in processing.

Yet as at the beginning of 2026, median wait times have extended to 27 days (up 22.7% from 2023-24). 103,527 older Australians are waiting to be assessed.²

The integrated assessment tool under the SAS is generating perverse recommendations – in some cases vastly over-assessing required support and others under-assessing. According to Older Persons Advocacy Network (OPAN), the specific issue with the Integrated Assessment Tool (IAT) is how the algorithm is interpreting the information entered into it and having no ability to override it by a common-sense, in person review.

The concern we have is that a cohort of people are not getting high priority because of the algorithm and an inflexible, unresponsive system.

Not only does this have implications for older people's timely access to appropriate care, it also leaves those working in the assessment sector frustrated and demoralised at a time when the sector is already struggling to attract and retain staff.

Access to funding for Support at Home services also continues to be a major concern. As it stands, the proposed rationing of packages to 30 June 2026 will not even meet the approved waitlist as at 30 June 2025. Review turnaround times need to be quicker so people are getting the help they need sooner - assessment reviews take up to 3 months and in that time the client gets worse.

In addition, many older people who were previously able to meet their care needs within home care package funding are now reporting reduced hours of care and support because of the rising costs of services. This is completely at odds with the 'no worse off' principle.

Interim packages are only being funded to 60% for an unknown period, not giving clients certainty on when they will get the required help they need - 97% of packages being released are interim and 3% full packages. In regional areas, some older people are unable to use their approved funds because the relevant providers and services are simply not available.

2. 103,527 provided by Government officials in [additional estimates](#) February 2026 (p 13)

Finally, we have received reports of technical problems with Service Australia's administration of the means-tested care fee for residential aged care. This has resulted in both incorrect fees being calculated and automatically deducted from accounts, as well as unexpected refunds. In addition to the obvious financial harm, a lack of communication is resulting in confusion, concern, and underconfidence in the system.

In short, these combined issues point to a serious, systemic mismanagement of the government's aged care reforms, with detrimental impacts for elderly and vulnerable Australians. While we remain supportive of the government's need to ensure the aged care system is fiscally sustainable, we are concerned these issues are undermining the government's stated policy objective – to maintain the dignity and rights of older Australians.

The Report was delivered in October 2025, and made a number of excellent recommendations directly relevant to the issues highlighted above.

We would appreciate an urgent update from your office in relation to how the government proposes to address these critical issues, including a timeline for a response to the Report's recommendations.

We look forward to hearing from you,

Nicolette Boele MP
Federal Member for Bradfield

Dr Helen Haines MP
Federal Member for Indi

Dr Sophie Scamps MP
Federal Member for Mackellar

Kate Chaney MP
Federal Member for Curtin

Dr Monique Ryan
Federal Member for Kooyong

Allegra Spender MP
Federal Member for Wentworth

Andrew Wilkie MP
Federal Member for Clark

Zali Steggall MP
Federal Member for Warringah